And on the Lighter Side . . .

Lest we take ourselves too seriously, we have decided to create a regular department for laughing at our own whims and weaknesses in the performance biz. It was suggested that any one of our programmed-instructional materials from the early years would be a suitable funny piece, but we decided against it. Instead, we offer an excerpt from *The Compleat Programer* (being a Compendium of a Definitive Glossary, Exemplary Programs and Assorted Papers for the Edification of Practitioners, MCMLXVI) a collectors item, edited by Susan M. Markle. Your contributions to this department are welcome.

The Devil's Dictionary of Programed Instruction

Susan M. Markle

Auto-Instructional Methods: not to be confused with driver training. An English translation will be found under *self-instruction*. The coiners of this term had a fondness for initials, particularly AIM's and AID's.* (*auto-instructional devices, obviously)

Branch: a choice point for lazy students in which an avoidance-avoidance conflict is created—to skip ahead and therefore make an error or to take an intermediate sequence of dull items.

Branch, Remedial: a technique for punishing students who slept through a lecture five years ago by making them listen this time.

Branch, Washback: a technique of punishing students who slept through the program five items ago. It is based on the theory that if you don't understand what the teacher said, you can at least come to believe what you don't understand by learning it verbatim.

Chain, Daisy: the diagram that results from schematizing the usual branching procedures in a scrambled program. Daisies have two to five petals:

Error: a disagreement between student and programer as to what has been taught in the program. In contradistinction to usual teaching procedures, if the student makes sufficient errors, the programer flunks, because students, God bless them, are always right.

Error Rate: a manipulable statistic in programed instruction. It can be reduced by allowing students to peek, by adding sufficient prompts, (see *prompt*), or by asking students a sufficient number of questions they can answer—such as "write your own name."

Fading: the process of making holes in the swiss cheese (see *frame, swiss cheese*). Good programers take one hole at a time, then two, then three, etc., proliferating

frames to satisfy frame-counting purchasers. With a random number table, a long program can be generated. (If a number comes up a second time, you have a review frame.)

Frame, Bad Boy: in intrinsic programs, any frame which student arrives at by making a stupid mistake. Its format typically includes: the answer he unfortunately chose, a juicy insult to his intelligence, a lecture at the third grade level, and instructions to return to the original item and use his head this time (i.e., choose the *other* answer).

Frame, Swiss Cheese: the ____ of ____ often ____ by ____s as a demonstration that the ____ has ____d the ____ (ans.: type, frame, constructed, linear programers, student, learned or acquired, sentence or subject or behavior or repertoire or response, rotely.)

Pacing, Group: the ordinary procedure of putting several children together on a program and having one designated leader. All others are to turn the page when the leader does.

Pacing, Self: a pipe dream of certain psychologists easily destructible by putting two children on the same program within talking distance of each other—they will race to finish.

Programer: a person naive enough to try to write a program. Generally not aware of the pitfalls in the subject-matter; preferably unconcerned with philosophical and semantic niceties, and most successful if willing to rewrite the English language.

Programing, Linear: an approach to programing based on the theory that there is an ideal sequence for the average child. Some programers have discovered the sequence. Now we are looking for the average child.

Programing, Intrinsic: an approach to programing based on the theory that we don't know how students learn so we had better let them do it themselves. In case they don't know how either, they can use a linear program.

Prompt: a technique for avoiding the issue of whether the student knows what the programer means. If skillfully used, prompts permit all students to answer all items correctly without reading the rest of the text.

Reinforcement: a *deus ex machine*, extracted from pellets and pasted onto answer spaces. You can't see it or smell it, but you know it is there because some students learn some things, and that is reason enough.

Response, Passive: a semantic oddity (to act passively?) constructed by a non-speaker of English in order to avoid discussing events not measurable by psychologists, such as thinking and imagination.

Responsive Environment: a revolutionary system consisting of an unbreakable machine that behaves like a human and an imperturable human that behaves like a machine.

Scrambled Book: a device for investigating whether logical sequencing of items makes any difference. It doesn't.

Self-Instructional Methods: A euphemism meant to hide from the tenderminded the mass brainwashing about to be inflicted by means of mechanical teachers. Better termed "solitary refinement."

Task Analysis: the lengthiest part of constructing a program. This is the period in which the programer learns the subject matter and all the prerequisites (like 3rd grade arithmetic) so that he can teach the student twice as much in half the time.

Teaching Machine: a device for keeping teachers responding actively while their students learn; guaranteed to require attention at least once an hour—either with a screwdriver or with bandaids for students' fingers. Its use is recommended as a device for adding a substantial constant time factor to the students' performance, thereby preventing the bright student from getting too far ahead of his fellows.